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## Former Fredericktown, Mo., police officer gets life in prison for abusing boys

Friday, February 4, 2011  
By Jim Salter ~ The Associated Press

ST. CHARLES, Mo. (AP) -- Kenneth D. Tomlinson II was considered one of the good guys in the small town of Fredericktown: the top police officer, a trusted friend, a Boy Scout leader.

But on Friday, Circuit Judge Ted House called the hulking Tomlinson "every parent's nightmare" as he sentenced him to life in prison for sexually abusing two young brothers.

"Certainly time will tell the total extent of the harm you have caused these victims," House said.

Attorney General Chris Koster, whose office handled the prosecution and who personally led the state's case at the sentencing hearing, called Tomlinson's actions "unforgiveable."

Tomlinson pleaded guilty in November to 22 counts related to sexual abuse of the boys, who were 11 and 13 when the crimes began in spring 2009. Both were part of the Boy Scout troop in which Tomlinson was scout master.

Tomlinson, a married father of two adopted children, stared ahead during most of the two-hour hearing, held in St. Charles on a change of venue. His hands appeared to shake as he unfolded a handwritten statement apologizing to the victims and their family and promising to get counseling in prison. His attorney, Susan DeGeorge read it for him.

"Please know that I would never have intentionally hurt them, as I cared for them as well," the statement said.

The abuse was discovered Jan. 2, 2010, when a relative found sexually explicit text messages from "Big Dog" on one of the boys' cell phone. Tomlinson, 6-foot-2 and perhaps 350 pounds, referred to himself as "Big Dog."

The relative told the boys' parents, and they contacted police. Tomlinson was arrested days later and confessed.

At the time of his arrest, Tomlinson was captain -- the equivalent of chief -- of the police department in Fredericktown, a community of 4,100 residents about 80 miles southwest of St. Louis. Tomlinson had been with the department since 1997 and was promoted to the top job just nine months before his arrest.

He had also been a Scout leader since 1998. Authorities said there was no evidence any other Boy Scouts had been physically abused.

But Christopher Bleich, a computer forensics examiner for the attorney general's office, testified that authorities found a clip on Tomlinson's home computer in which he shot video of boys in a shower at a Scout camp.

All told, authorities found nearly 5,000 images of downloaded child porn on two of Tomlinson's computers, along with video he shot of the victims engaged in explicit acts.

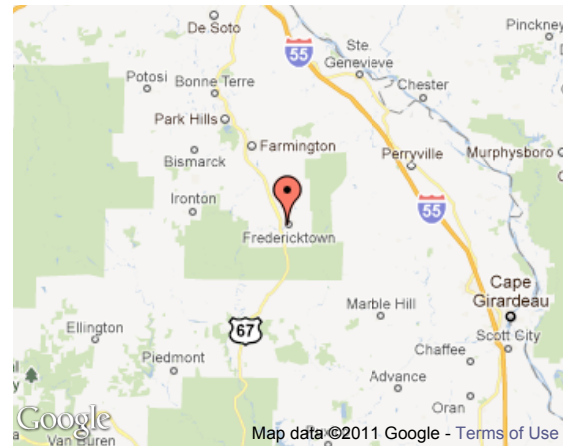


This photo provided by Charles County Department of Corrections shows Kenneth D. Tomlinson II, 43. The former Fredericktown, Mo., police captain and Boy Scout leader, was sentenced in St. Charles court to three consecutive terms of life in prison plus 22 years for sexual contact with two young boys on Friday, Feb. 4,

2011. (AP Photo/ St. Charles County Department of Corrections)

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A forensic psychologist called by DeGeorge testified that Tomlinson himself had been physically abused as a child by his father and sexually abused by older boys in his neighborhood. Psychologist Michael Armour said Tomlinson suffers from major depressive disorder and post-traumatic stress disorder.

In his closing statement, Koster said there was no excuse for what Tomlinson did. He said he earned the trust of the boys as their Scout leader and as a police officer, "then took them as sexual slaves for his own enjoyment."

The parents of the boys testified that their lives have been turned upside down. The boys are angry, withdrawn, their grades suffering. They've lost friends. Relations within the family are strained. Worse yet, there's no telling when, or even if, they'll ever recover emotionally.

"It makes me sick to my stomach to think what my children endured," their father said.

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